upgradation of small scale industries functioning in Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with Indonesia is under consideration;

(b) the action taken on the request made by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in this regard; and

(c) the other steps proposed for promotion of technology upgradation among small scale industries through international cooperation?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) A project proposal prepared by the Andhra Pradesh Industrial and Technology Consultancy Organisation for international cooperation between India and Indonesia, to promote technology transfer from the Indonesian small and medium enterprises to the Indian Small Scale Industries and vice-versa was submitted to the Office of the Development Commissioner, Small Scale Industries, New Delhi for funding under the Scheme of "International Cooperation—Modernisation and Technology Upgradation". An amount of Rs. 6.50 lakhs has been sanctioned to the Office of DC (SSI) through whom the proposal was received.

(b) This Department has examined the proposal of APITCO and sanctioned Rs. 6.50 lakhs. State Government of Andhra Pradesh has been informed of the action taken.

(c) In order to promote technology upgradation and modernisation in the SSI sector, the Department of Small Scale Industries and Agro & Rural Industries is implementing the scheme of International Cooperation—Modernisation and Technology upgradation under the "Plan" from the year 1995-96. Under this scheme financial assistance is provided to National Small Industries Corporation, State Agencies, Industry associations and Export Promotion Councils for promoting modernisation and technolocy upgradation in the SSI Sector.

Foreign exchange earnings from Gem and Jewellery

*150. SHRI E. BALANANDAN:
SHRI MD. SALIM:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the net earnings of foreign exchange from the gem and jewellery (export minus import of gold, diamond, gem and other previous stones etc.) for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLAHBULLI RAMAIH): The net foreign exchange earned in Gem and Jewellery Sector during last three years is as follows:—

(Value in US$ Million)

Year	Exports	Imports	Net Foreign* exchange earnings
1993-94	3994.70	2817.73	1176.97
1994-95	4500.40	2098.15	2402.25
1995-96	5275.44	3516.00	1759.44

*The net yearwise foreign exchange earning figures are only notional to the extent that there is invariably a time lag between imports and exports.

US ban on Indian Shrimps

*151. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the USA has imposed ban/ restrictions on the Indian Shrimp exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action proposed by the Government to settle the issue;

(d) whether the Government are contemplating to approach World Trade Organisation to stay the restrictions imposed by the USA; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) USA has imposed a ban which is applicable to exports of Indian Shrimp and products derived from shrimp which have been harvested with commercial fishing technology which may adversely affect sea turtles. Based on ruling of the U.S. Court of International Trade given on 29.12.1995, Section 609 of the U.S. Public Law No. 101-162 is applicable to India,

alongwith other nations. India must therefore comply with the requirements of Section 609 by 1st May, 1996 in order to continue exporting of such shrimp to USA beyond this date. On October, 8, 1996, the U.S. Court of International Trade ruled that shrimp harvested in the wild may not be imported into the U.S. unless the harvesting nation is certified under Section 609 of Public law 101-162 as possessing an approved sea turtle protection regime. As per the clarification received from the U.S. Embassy at New Delhi, the new Court ruling prohibits importation of all shrimp from uncertified countries, except shrimp harvested from aquaculture.

(c) The Government of India has already authorised Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) to countersign a certificate (DSP-121 as prescribed by U.S. Govt.) and authenticated by the exporters concerned that a particular consignment of shrimps for exports to USA has been sourced from aquaculture. Government of India has begun to assess the efficacy of the present sea turtle protection programme. State Governments have been requested to cooperate in this direction to safeguard sea turtles and the shrimp trade.

(d) and (e) The Government of India jointly with the Governments of Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand have already approached World Trade organisation through Dispute Settlement Mechanism for redressal of the ban imposed by U.S. Government.

Introduction of dual price system in PDS

*152. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a dual price mechanism for the beneficiaries of the PDS in the country;

(b) the norms being fixed for fixation of prices for the 'affluent section' and the actual poor alongwith price differentials for both the categories;

(c) whether the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs on the PDS policy have been taken into consideration before finalising the dual price policy;

(d) whether Government are considering hike in price in near future for the 'affluent section' so as to subsidise the 'actual poor'; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The issue of streamlining the Public Distribution System with focus on the poor by issue of separate cards for the population below poverty line and issuing commodities at half the normal issue price was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers in July 96 and later with State Food Ministers on 7th August 96. The Conference endorsed the proposal for the provision of specially subsidised foodgrains to the population below poverty line.

Streamlining the PDS on these lines is under consideration of the Government.

Implementation of NCRL's Report of 1991

*153. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) in its Report of 1991 had recommended that the minimum rate of wages for the agricultural workers should not be fixed below Rs. 20 per day on the basis of prices prevailing during 1990s;

(b) if so, whether the recommendation has been implementated by the State Governments, particularly that of Gujarat;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action Government propose to take to implement the recommendations of NCRL throughout the country for the benefit of agricultural workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) The National Commission on Rural Labour in its report